

# **EXHIBIT II**

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**From:** LYNNE FREEMAN <lynnef@gci.net>  
**Sent:** January 20, 2015 8:30 PM  
**To:** Mary Kole  
**Subject:** Re: MASQUED Notes

Hi Mary -

I've had the devil of a time working on the plot. I've re-drafted the backstory and spent a lot of time re-reading your book.

Since you said I could run plot ideas by you, here we go.....

This isn't written to be pretty. It's just the down and dirty...

**Plot**

16 year old Mia St. James has recently learned she's a witch. Like all witches, she has a sacred duty to discover her calling, the one thing she alone must do to maintain the balance. Her aunt is a healer. Her mother is an artist whose work heals emotional wounds. Mia desperately wants to discover her own calling, which isn't easy because her mother doesn't want her to practice the Craft.

Mia is having disturbing visions of being hunted in the forest. Before she can see the face of her hunter, she always wakes up. Mia uses her Tarot cards and has the most powerful vision she's ever had, one which leaves her bruised and bleeding in the waking world. When she turns to face her hunter in the vision, her destiny, she sees the face of a boy her own age she's never met, but knows she will fall in love with. She believes her calling is to save him.

The boy (Roman) is a Darkhunter. He has a sworn duty to find the Nyx (offspring of a Light and Shadows being) and destroy her. Nyx have more power than either of their parents and are a threat to the balance.

Mia comes into her Powers over the course of the story. She is not a healer like her aunt and mother. She has the ability to absorb and remove the Powers of other Unseen, to gather their souls and release them to Death, or to send them directly to the Otherworld for a second chance, where they will have to remain. These abilities don't come to her all at once. They develop over the story as she sets herself up to watch over Roman and help him find the Nyx.

In the story, when she and Roman kiss, she's absorbing his Powers and removing them from him. When she fights the demon that attacks Cat in the classroom, she chooses to strip him of his Powers and send him to the Otherworld for a second chance. She has to learn to control her Powers to prevent lethal consequences.

Mia learns that her bio father, Julian, is a Lord of the Light court, an evil Druid, who is out to destroy the Shadows court and all who serve the Lady of the Moon (ruler of the Shadows court).

The story centers around Mia's quest to discover who she is and why she's here. Is she evil because of her father's taint? Are her gifts evil? Does she have a choice in how she uses them, and ultimately who and what she will become?

When faced with who she is, she and Roman both choose not to accept their sacred duties to their respective courts. Instead, they will work together to stop Julian and try to unite the 2 courts once again.

There is a back story as to why Shadows and Light are at war. They do not represent good and evil. I've chosen to make the Light "evil" racist beings and the Shadows "the good guys," playing with concepts of good and evil, ancient Celtic mythology and spirituality. Witches are ruled by the Lady of the Moon, the Morrigan (who is Mia's grandmother). Druids are ruled by the Lord of Light, the Dagda.

The current book ends where it ends, after the battle with Julian where he gets away and Mia's mother is hurt. Mia releases her to the Otherworld, never to return, rather than see her die.

----- Original Message -----

**From:** "Mary Kole" <marykoleeditorial@gmail.com>

**To:** "LYNNE FREEMAN" <lynnef@gci.net>

**Cc:**

**Sent:** Wed, 10 Dec 2014 19:33:42 -0600

**Subject:** Re: MASQUED Notes

Please do run the plot ideas by me when you have a chance to write them up. I'm happy to review and comment! My address is 5935 Girard Ave S, Minneapolis, MN 55419. Thank you!

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Mary Kole

[www.kidlit.com](http://www.kidlit.com) (writing and publishing children's books)

[www.marykole.com](http://www.marykole.com) (editorial and consulting services)

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On Tue, Dec 9, 2014 at 10:14 PM, LYNNE FREEMAN <[lynnef@gci.net](mailto:lynnef@gci.net)> wrote:

Hi Mary -

Thank you for the additional feedback. I'm working on a plot fix and would love to run it by you. I'll be mailing the balance of your payment tomorrow. Would you mind sending me the address again? Sorry for the delay.

Best,  
Lynne

----- Original Message -----

**From:**  
"Mary Kole" <[marykoleeditorial@gmail.com](mailto:marykoleeditorial@gmail.com)>

**To:**  
"LYNNE FREEMAN" <[lynnef@gci.net](mailto:lynnef@gci.net)>  
**Cc:**

**Sent:**  
Wed, 3 Dec 2014 18:40:40 -0600  
**Subject:**  
Re: MASQUED Notes

Dear Lynne,

Again, I'll have to thank you for getting to read the comments so quickly. I think you are quite a powerful writer, and the first chapter of the story shows tremendous potential for the sort of captivating tone and characterization that you are capable of. But we do waffle from it over the course of the manuscript, and then comes the big issue: plot. Quite simply, I do not believe yet that you are telling the story to its full potential, and more importantly that you are not choosing the right slice of the story to tell.

I made reference to Romeo and Juliet a few times because theirs is an impossible love story, along the lines of what I think you're aiming for with Mia and Roman. They come from two different magical clans and cannot coexist by sheer virtue of who they are. Instead of telling THAT story, though, you stall on the reveal of who Mia is until the very, very end so that you don't have to figure out how to tell an impossible story. The realization that Juliet is a Capulet comes near the very beginning of Shakespeare's version, after all, and then we have an entire play that deals with it.

Here, you have several magical elements working very much in your favor. You have the mythology of the Darkhunters and the mythology of the Nyx. Cut the other magical elements away and focus on fleshing those out. Remove the veil that keeps them ignorant of one another. Let Mia learn what she is in the first 25% of the manuscript, so that you can move forward with telling that impossible, high stakes love story. As is, when Roman learns what she is, he says, "We'll make it work." So let him say that near the beginning and then let the stakes rise naturally. He is now a pariah from the Order and she is on the run (or whatever). It's also now common knowledge that she's the Nyx, so I would imagine many people are after her.

If you were to sit down across from me at a conference, and I asked you what your story was about, what would you say? If you said, "It's a story about this girl who realizes she's a blend of dark and light magic, called a Nyx." I would say, "Oh, cool. And then what?" But in the manuscript as is, there is no "then what." Her realizing she's the Nyx is at the current end of the story. It should be the beginning. There is a lot of stalling and denial leading up to the realization, and that takes up all of your time, and it severely caps the potential of what you could be doing, plot-wise.

My strong suggestion would be to sift through and find which elements of the magical world you want to keep. I'd suggest the Darkhunters, the Nyx, and the Order. Maybe add on the Celtic mythology because that's also going to be a unique value proposition for the marketplace. A lot of the other more generic magic can fall away. The tarot is currently used as an organizational tool but its presence in the story really comes and goes. Decide if it's something you can't live without. Then write up a detailed outline of a new plot, one where Mia realizes she's the Nyx by 25% into the manuscript. This is her new reality. She can't run away from it, she can't deny it. What happens next? That's your selling point, the Nyx mythology. The story can't effectively end once she realizes what she is. Instead of the struggle between

her and Roman being the flip-flopping that's currently in place, now it becomes much bigger: We love one another and are committed (no stalling, no denial, no flip-flopping). There are enemies on either side of us, and allegiances that mean the stakes are high. What do we do with it? How do we make it work?

You've crafted a lot of these elements. They exist. Now put them into action, rather into a holding pattern while Mia denies what she is. Please let me know if you have thoughts or questions. I'm happy to be a sounding board for plot ideas that you generate, for example, but the bulk of that creative work is up to you. The world has promise, the elements are there, and you're a strong writer. The biggest obstacle, as I said earlier, is that you chose a "slice" of the story to tell that has less potential than what you could've focused on.

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Mary Kole

[www.kidlit.com](http://www.kidlit.com) (writing and publishing children's books)

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On Tue, Dec 2, 2014 at 9:47 PM, LYNNE FREEMAN <[lynnef@gci.net](mailto:lynnef@gci.net)> wrote:

Hi Mary -

I read through your comments in the manuscript and the email you wrote. I understand what you're saying about Mia and Roman and the plot.

I have no idea what to do right now to fix it. Chuck it in the trash is where I'm headed (wink wink).

A significant re-write of the entire story, start to finish, is what it sounds like. The critique is helpful, but I guess I was hoping for a bit more direction. Feeling dense here. Is this story worth spending the hours, days and weeks to revise? Maybe the story isn't good enough for the market?

I'm not sure whether sending a query at this point is a good idea. Let me think on this a bit.

Thanks,

Lynne

----- Original Message -----

**From:**

"Mary Kole" <[marykoleeditorial@gmail.com](mailto:marykoleeditorial@gmail.com)>

**To:**

"Lynne Freeman" <[lynnef@gci.net](mailto:lynnef@gci.net)>

**Cc:**

**Sent:**

Tue, 2 Dec 2014 19:49:19 -0600

**Subject:**

MASQUED Notes

Dear Lynne,

Thank you so much for the privilege of working on MASQUED. It's a pleasure reading your writing and seeing how you chose to weave your story. There is a lot to recommend here, and your writing has a very strong basic foundation. Most of my notes focus on your voice, tone, characterization, and plotting choices.



The biggest issue is the following: I believe that you end your story right as it should be beginning. That's not to say that you should double the length of the existing manuscript, though. It's to say that a lot of what happens before the current ending is in a holding pattern, as we're waiting for Mia to "buy in" to the story concept you've chosen. Meanwhile, she waffles a lot about Roman and whether or not she loves him and can be with him, while basically operating in advanced denial of her true identity as the Nyx. Throughout, I will call this the "rut." Just as she actually starts participating in the magical world you've created, the story puzzlingly comes to an end

All of the potential you have to differentiate yourself in the market is linked to your rendering of the magical world you've created. There is a lot of competition out there for run-of-the-mill paranormal stories. You run the risk of being classified as one of them because you take a kitchen sink approach to your paranormal elements. There are hints of were and vampire mythologies that threaten your opportunity to be unique. Instead of including more and more elements, I think you should focus your paranormal leanings to cover only certain mythologies that are going to play out in the story. You need fewer types of magical creatures by the end, not more (it's a bit boggling that everyone and their mom is basically paranormal). You need more rules for how the magic works and more consequences for breaking those rules. The Devil's Triangle blindness that keeps everyone's magic identity is a good rule, but it really serves to keep your stakes low and your characters ignorant of their true roles...when the whole idea should be a coming-of-age and a discovery of one's true self. This is not, as it stands, a strong choice with a lot of potential for stakes and tension.

And perhaps the biggest character note that dovetails with this is that Mia seems to bend so many of the rules and manages to somehow avoid the true consequences of her actions in many situations. When her mother is wounded with no possible way around her death, we're told, there just happens to be an amazing solution. In the same vein, Mia is often reactive to the situation of her magical abilities coming online instead of proactive. She knows she needs to reveal several things to Roman and discuss several things with her mother, but there's a whole lot of stalling that happens, and it seems that she never really does take these big steps to figure out her place in the world (until she absolutely has to).

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There's a whole lot more to say about the manuscript, and you'll find thousands of thoughts in the feedback itself. Without further ado... I give notes using Word's Track Changes function, and they should pop up when you open the document. If not, go to the "View" menu and make sure that "Markup" is selected. That way your program knows to display comments, which can sometimes be hidden as a default setting. It's important, I believe, to sit down and read the manuscript once through in tandem with the notes, resisting the urge to tweak until you've done a hands-off tour. This usually takes writers from the page-to-page small picture to the big picture, which will provide a fresh perspective, especially when paired with the editorial feedback.

It was a pleasure working with you on this project. I'll keep an eye on the mail for the balance of your fee. If you have any questions, want any clarification, or are otherwise curious about related subjects like agents, submitting, or the market, please go ahead and ask. My door is always open!

Mary

PS - If you feel compelled to submit a testimonial to me via email for posting on my website, I would really appreciate your feedback. You are, of course, under no obligation to do so!

PSS - I owe you a query edit. Please send along a query letter whenever you get a chance, and I will turn it around for you with feedback within a week of receiving it.

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Mary Kole

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